



# BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Berrien County Health Department Educating Community on Dangers of Underage Marijuana Use , Providing Resources to Help**

**Benton Harbor, Michigan, July 11, 2023** – According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one in four Michigan teens have used marijuana in their lifetime.

This summer, the Berrien County Health Department is educating community members about the dangers of underage marijuana use and providing resources to help. The campaign runs through September and looks to share information on the effects of underage marijuana use to individuals younger than 21 and parents of teens. It provides information about harmful impacts marijuana usage can have on those who are underage and provides resources for parents and caregivers.

“It’s important for teens and the adults who love them to be aware of the dangers of underage marijuana use,” said Lisa Peeples-Hurst, public health promotion and prevention supervisor. “Though marijuana use is legal in Michigan for individuals over the age of 21, it is neither legal nor healthy for young people to use.

“We must work together to limit the negative effects this drug has on young people in our community.”

According to a 2021 survey from the CDC, nearly 37% of Michigan high school seniors reported they had used marijuana in their lifetime, and more than 22% reported using marijuana at least once in the past 30 days.

Marijuana can have more negative impacts on individuals under the age of 21 because their brains are still developing. Some of the negative impacts associated with underage marijuana use include:

- Issues with attention, concentration, problem solving, learning and memory
- Poor academic and job performance
- Lack of balance and coordination
- Poor decision-making
- Difficulties in relationships

- Increased risk of mental health challenges

Regular marijuana use underage can also lead to impaired driving and greater risk of addiction.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration says the following may be signs for parents and caregivers that teens and young adults in their life may be using marijuana underage:

- Unusual laughing, coordination issues and forgetfulness
- Bloodshot eyes or frequent use of eye drops
- Frequent use of incense, candles and other deodorizers
- Unexplained lack of money or frequent requests for money
- Presence of equipment, product or material that is modified for making, using, or concealing a controlled substance, such as pipes, bongs and cigars

Parents and caregivers can help limit risk for young people in their life by talking to them about marijuana and other substances. SAMHSA has [resources available](#) to help get the conversation started.

For more information about this campaign, visit [berriencounty.org/1580/Get-the-Dirt-on-Weed](http://berriencounty.org/1580/Get-the-Dirt-on-Weed) or contact Lisa Peoples-Hurst at 269.927.5690.

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